

## Guide to Collecting your own Apple and Pear Scionwood

1. When
  - a. The apple or pear must be dormant (no leaves) and the buds haven't begun to swell yet. Usually Jan & Feb in zone 7.
  - b. Collect on a dry day (no rain or after the fog has dried off) to reduce disease transmission.
  - c. If you cut them early in the year, you'll have to store them longer until you can graft.
2. Where
  - a. Last year's wood makes the best scionwood. Look at the tip of a branch, then downward until you see the annual ring (bud scale scar) where last year's growth started. Healthy, younger trees may have long shoots each year. Older, heirloom trees may have less than an inch of new growth each year.
  - b. The best scionwood grows on the sunny side of the tree, up in the canopy, angling up off the main branch at about 45°-60°.
  - c. Watersprouts make OK scionwood, but they're not the best. They have lots of auxins (a hormone) and few carbohydrates, which will slow down the fruiting of your new tree.
  - d. Don't use wood hanging down or horizontally. Horizontal branches have lots of fruit buds and you want a leaf bud to grow into a new tree.
  - e. Look for new shoots that are 6-12" long and about the thickness of a pencil. You'll have better success with your graft if the scionwood and rootstock are about the same diameter.
3. How
  - a. Take large plastic ziplock bags, paper towels and permanent markers.
  - b. Cut off last year's growth at the annual ring. Use sharp, disinfected tools to make a clean cut and minimize disease.
  - c. Barely moisten a paper towel (too moist and you get mold), wrap in around the scions, put them in the ziplock bag, seal tightly and label with the name of the apple or pear variety.
  - d. Store bags with scions in the vegetable drawer of your refrigerator (33-37°F). Don't store apples or other ripening fruit in the same fridge. Ripening fruit produces ethylene, which will kill the buds on your scionwood.
4. Now what?
  - a. At some point, you'll cut off the top bud and discard it (terminal buds have auxins). The best scionwood has 3 buds after you've removed the terminal bud, that gives you 3 chances to produce a new tree after grafting.
  - b. The key to collecting scionwood (and successful grafting) is to collect dormant buds, keep them cold and dormant, and keep them from drying out. Then when you graft them onto the rootstock and they "wake up", they're ready and eager to grow!